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SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

Sheridan Takes Command of the Military Division.

BATTLE OF OPEQUAN.

Early, Defeated, Retreats up the Valley.

FISHER'S HILL.

Sheridan Arrives and Drives Early from Cedar Creek.

BY J. NEWTON FERRILL, CO. E, 14TH N. J., NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

THE Middle Military Department and the Departments of West Virginia, Washington and Susquehanna were constituted into the Middle Military Division, and Maj. Gen. Sheridan was assigned to command the same. Two divisions of cavalry were sent from the Army of the Potomac, commanded by Gens. Torbert and Wilson. The Middle Military Division now numbered nearly 50,000 men, well armed and equipped, ready to move and attack the rebel army now in position near Winchester. They had also received reinforcements, a division under Gen. Anderson having arrived. Both armies were nearly equal in strength, with the advantage on the side of the enemy, as they had no capital to cover, and could move in whatever direction they pleased. The men were engaged in threshing wheat and forwarding it to Richmond, having compelled every farmer to give all their proceeds to help the Confederacy, keeping but one-tenth for themselves.

On the 10th of August the troops moved out from their position at Halltown, marching 15 miles, passing through Charlestown, where John Brown was hung. The march was continued the next day, the army making 18 miles, the enemy retreating up the Valley and our forces following them. After marching 50 miles in three successive days, overtaking their rear-guard at Cedar Creek, having passed through Newmarket and Middletown, several villages, filled with Mosby's men, who were very peaceable until our army passed, when they were ready to fall upon our rear-guard, plundering, robbing and even murdering our soldiers and doing all the damage they could. The main body of the rebels were strongly entrenched on FISHER'S HILL,

a place almost impregnable, that could not be carried by direct assault. The Shenandoah Valley was filled with waving fields of grain, the crops ripe and ready for the sickle. For nearly 100 miles the Valley was level and the scenery splendid, this being the prettiest part of Virginia. At a distance of from seven to 12 miles apart were villages from Harper's Ferry to Staunton. No engagement took place at Cedar Creek, as we expected, as we were too far from our base of supplies to risk a battle. After lying near Cedar Creek three days, the troops were ordered to fall back for the purpose of drawing the enemy from Fisher's Hill; starting at dark moving back on the Valley pike, marching all night, passing through Newmarket, Middletown and Kernstown, halting at Winchester for breakfast; passing through the place, once a fine town, but now nearly deserted; no business was transacted, as both rebel and Union armies occupied the place at different times. The troops marched during the night 18 miles and during the morning 10 miles, halting on a hill.

The enemy, supposing us retreating, followed us closely, skirmishing with the cavalry at Winchester, in which a portion of the First New Jersey Brigade were captured while supporting the cavalry. Our rear-guard was driven from Winchester with considerable loss. The troops were compelled to move the next day 18 miles, encamping near Charlestown, the enemy again halting at Winchester. In retaliation for Chambersburg the men burned and destroyed everything, entering houses and helping themselves to all that came in their way. The men were out of rations, and lived off the country, as flour, green corn, and chickens were found in abundance.

Both armies were again in camp, with tents up in regular order, the operations during the month of August being both of an offensive and defensive character, resulting in a few skirmishes, but as yet no general engagement had taken place. The two armies now lay in position, the enemy on the west bank of Opequan Creek, covering Winchester, and our forces in position at Charlestown, so that either army could bring on a battle at any time. Defeat to us would lay open to the enemy Maryland and Pennsylvania for long distances before our army could check them, and under such circumstances Gen. Sheridan hesitated to attack, and waited for more positive orders from Grant. The 14th N. J. was again recruited, swelling the number to about 300 men. Col. Trues being at home, the regiment was commanded by Maj. Vredenberg; Lieut. Col. Hall having been wounded at Monocacy, resigning his commission, Maj. Vredenberg having been for the past year Inspector-General on Headquarters staff, he being the ranking officer, was relieved, and ordered to the command of the regiment at Halltown on the 19th of August.

Sunday, Aug. 23, the enemy surprised our camp at daylight, attacking in force. The troops soon formed in line of battle, fighting

during the day, and building works. But few were lost on either side, as nothing but skirmishing was kept up. At night OUR FORCES FELL BACK

to our old position at Halltown, eight miles distant, the enemy pursuing and firing upon our rear-guard, compelling them to fall back in a hurry within the defenses of Maryland Heights, when the pursuit was abandoned, all the time the rain pouring in torrents. For several days bodies of troops, mostly cavalry, were sent out on a reconnaissance, which discovered the enemy still in position at Charlestown. The men were fast losing confidence in Gen. Sheridan, as he did nothing but advance and retreat without fighting a decisive battle; but none of the men knew the energy and determination of their gallant leader, who was only waiting for orders from Gen. Grant to bring on a general engagement.

The troops remained in camp at Halltown until Sunday, when orders were received to move, passing the enemy's works near Charlestown, the enemy having fallen back, and halted in a wood. During the afternoon Chaplain Rose delivered a brief discourse as the men lay in line, after which we moved again, halting in the old camp we were driven from the previous Sunday, eight miles from Halltown, remaining there until Sept. 3, when the troops moved again, encamping at a place called Clifton Farm. The Eighth Corps, being in the advance, met the enemy at Opequan Creek, and after a severe engagement drove them back across the creek, with heavy loss in both sides. Darkness and rain ended the contest, the troops sleeping on their arms. Both armies were now very vigilant, as they were but a few miles apart. The troops remained in camp at Clifton Farm 15 days, drawing rations and clothing. The Second Division of the Sixth Corps, with a brigade of cavalry, moved out on a reconnaissance to Opequan



GRANT AND SHERIDAN CONSULTING.

Creek. The enemy was found in force, with strong works erected on the opposite side; they were completely surprised. The division succeeded in capturing a South Carolina regiment, numbering 400 men. WITH ITS OFFICERS AND COLORES. After a short skirmish the division returned with the prisoners captured, the rebels crestfallen at our daring, but afraid to follow us up. The men were very tired of maneuvering up and down the Valley, and were anxious to meet the enemy and decide which of the two armies was the most competent to hold the Valley. Grant, finding the use of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which were both obstructed by the enemy, became so indispensably necessary to us, and the importance of relieving Maryland and Pennsylvania from continuously threatened invasion so great, that he determined to visit Gen. Sheridan and order an immediate attack. Leaving City Point on the 15th of September, he visited him at Charlestown to decide, after a conference with him, what should be done; and after a calm deliberation it was decided to attack as soon as the army and trains could be brought into position.

For convenience of forage, the teams for supplying the army were kept at Harper's Ferry. Grant remained at Sheridan's headquarters but one day, giving his final orders and leaving for City Point, Sheridan returning to his headquarters and issuing orders for a forward movement. On the afternoon of Sunday, the 16th, orders were given the troops to move at a moment's notice. All now felt that the time had arrived when the rebel army, under its audacious leaders, should be driven from the Valley, where for the last two months they had led defiance to the loyal North, and with their frowning earthworks at Winchester were ever ready to resist our advance. For several mornings previous to the attack the cavalry had dashed up to their front and then retired after

EXCHANGING A FEW SHOTS. This was done so often that when the attack was made they were not as well prepared as if this had not been done, as the advance was led by the dashing Custer with his brigade of cavalry.

At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 19th of September the troops on two roads moved out, and marching 12 miles crossed at Opequan Creek. As usual, the cavalry in stronger force than heretofore attacked them in their position. The rebels were completely surprised. Kershaw's Division had left the day before for the purpose of barring and destroying what they could in Maryland and Pennsylvania. They were at Bunker's Hill, 10 miles away, when the attack was made and Gen. Early sent immediately for them, and they returned in haste, nearly all the way on a double-quick.

Both armies soon became hotly engaged, and for some time it was doubtful which side was gaining; but after a most sanguinary battle, which lasted until 6 o'clock in the evening, the enemy were defeated with heavy loss, their entire position carried from Opequan Creek to Winchester, and several thousand prisoners and five pieces of artillery taken. The enemy retired several times, only to be broken again by the terrible onslaught of the Union boys. Kershaw's

Division arrived during the afternoon, but too late, and with their comrades were compelled to fall back. During the morning the Nineteenth Corps, which was on the extreme left, was driven in, but, supported by one division of the Sixth Corps, they rallied, and in turn drove the enemy back some distance. It was a hard-fought battle, and the enemy, with their thinned ranks

IN A DEMORALIZED CONDITION, retreated in haste through Winchester. Gen. Early was so intoxicated, the prisoners said, that it was with much difficulty he could keep on his horse. The rebel press attributed their defeat to this. The rebel soldiers were positive that Grant was in command, as Sheridan never before had exhibited such generalship. The Third Division lost heavily in killed and wounded. Col. Elbright, commanding the 126th Ohio, was killed, as was Gen. Russell, commanding the First Division, Sixth Corps.

The 14th N. J. lost in killed and wounded 160 men, but the greatest loss of all was Maj. Vredenberg. A brave officer never lived. He was at the head of his regiment, ordering the men to charge a rebel battery, when a shell struck him in the breast, knocking him from his horse and killing him instantly. He was carried to the rear, and his remains sent to New Jersey. His loss was deeply felt by the men, as he was always esteemed a brave and competent officer. The regiment charged the battery, captured it, and the last order ever given by him was executed with promptness, and the death of Maj. Vredenberg avenged. Lieut. Green, of Co. I, was killed, and all the officers disabled and wounded, except Capt. Janeway, who was again placed in command of the regiment. The 57th Pa. had but a few days to stay, but were as eager as ever to join in the fight. Several of them were killed whose term had already expired.

THE REBEL LOSS WAS VERY SEVERE.

Gens. Rodes and Wharton, who led the attack at Monocacy, in which the Third Division suffered so severely, were both killed. The ground was covered with the munitions of war. As our victorious army pressed on after the flying rebels, the groans of the wounded and dying of both armies were painful to hear. Ghastly sights everywhere presented themselves to the eye, but to the soldiers were as nothing, as such scenes were every-day occurrences. The houses in Winchester were filled with rebel wounded, who were kindly cared for by the ladies of the place, both loyal and disloyal. The news of our success was immediately telegraphed to Washington, and the papers of the North were full of praises of our gallant little Sheridan and his noble army. There was now no fear of another invasion, and our National Capital was out of danger. The army now reposed every confidence in Sheridan, and gave him the name of "Little Phil," and those who but a few weeks before were ever ready to denounce him, were now the loudest in his praise. One hundred guns were fired at Winchester in honor of this great victory, which in itself was considered one of the decisive battles of the war. Had we been driven back both Washington and Baltimore would have been taken, and before another army could have been raised both places would have lain in ashes. This was the third and last attempted invasion of the North by the Confederate army, which had each time ended in disaster. The rebel papers, which had praised Early so highly but a short time before, were now clamorous for his removal.

THE ENEMY RETREATED

during the night, and made a stand in their old position at Fisher's Hill. Here they were confident of success, as it was thought impossible to dislodge them from their position. Here Early intended to make a stand until he received reinforcements from Richmond, and then retrieve his fast-falling reputation. He supposed Gen. Sheridan would not attack, and he would have time to recruit. Our column had halted in Winchester until daylight the next morning, when they rapidly pressed on. The enemy was at this time on Fisher's Hill, 22 miles from Winchester. The troops halted at Newtown for breakfast. The men had marched up and down the Valley so often that nearly every house and barn was familiar to them.

The troops halted at Newtown one hour, and then moved forward. Squads of rebel prisoners were picked up, as they were too tired to proceed farther. The number of prisoners captured in all was about 5,000. Our loss at Opequan was 1,500. After marching 20 miles we crossed Cedar Creek on a bridge built by the enemy, halting in the same woods the troops were in five weeks before. The rebel army had just been paid in Confederate money, which to them was as nothing. Gold now fell 20 per cent. in the North, and produce in proportion.

The 21st of September was spent in forming the troops in position, as Gen. Sheridan had determined to attack; but nothing was accomplished till night, when the 126th Ohio and 6th Md. charged the enemy's skirmish-line, driving them back two miles, and occupying a splendid position for artillery. Batteries were placed in position and the enemy shelled, they not replying, as their ammunition was scarce. The morning of the 22d found the troops in position; batteries from all parts of the line opened, but as yet elicited no response from the rebels.

At 3 o'clock Sheridan ordered an advance, the troops moving forward in eight lines of battle. Early expecting an attack in his immediate front, withdrew his troops from the left of his line. Taking advantage of this, the Eighth Corps, with the Third Division, Sixth Corps, moved on their flank, and before they were aware of it we were completely in their rear. A desperate battle now ensued, which lasted until dark, when the enemy were driven pell-mell from their fortified position and retreated in confusion, flanked both right and left, and the cavalry, under Imboden and Jones, was compelled to run in one demoralized mass, followed by our victorious columns.

POURING SHOT AND SHELL

into their retreating ranks. The Third Division captured six pieces of artillery; two of them were taken by the 14th N. J. Twenty-four pieces of artillery, 15 stands of colors, and 1,100 prisoners were the fruits of this victory. Sheridan was now almost worshipped by the men, as Fisher's Hill had always been considered impregnable, but "Cavalry Phil," or "Flanking Sheridan," as he was called, had accomplished what Fremont, Hunter, Banks and Shields had failed to do in the early days of the rebellion.

He was appointed a Major-General in the Regular Army, to fill the place vacated by McClellan. In the battle of Fisher's Hill the loss in the 14th N. J. was small, as they were on the flank with the Eighth Corps. The Second Division lost heavily in killed, the casualties in my regiment were 10 killed and 30 wounded. Capt. McKnight's battery, of the Third Division, created considerable panic in the enemy's ranks, as every shell they fired fell among them. Under cover of this battery the division advanced and captured a line of works with 400 prisoners and four pieces of artillery. No time was allowed the men to rest, although tired and weary and begrimed with dirt and powder. The flying rebels were pursued during the night of the 22d, the army marching 12 miles through Strasburg and Woodstock, halting for a few hours' rest in the morning. The enemy had a mortal fear of Custer and his cavalry, as he was always on their flank and rear when least expected. With one brigade to charge and another to blow the bugle, they could not stand. Their cavalry leader was named Imboden, but he was called "Runbuden," as he was always on the run to the rear when our cavalry appeared in sight. Four days' rations were issued the men at Woodstock, the trains having followed. The 57th Pa. had served their three years and were ordered to return home, with the exception of the re-enlisted men.

LEAVING WOODSTOCK,

the troops marched six miles, passing the village of Edenburg, and encamping in a woods near the railroad. The enemy had again halted on a hill, and were skirmishing with our cavalry. In the battles of Opequan and Fisher's Hill the enemy lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners 15,000 men, 15 stands of colors, and 30 pieces of artillery. The Union army lost 4,000 men, no colors, and no artillery. The troops were now pretty well rested, and moved again, marching 20 miles, passing through Mount Jackson, Haverhill, and New Market, still following the enemy and skirmishing with them during the entire march. The pike was level, and the retreating rebels could be plainly seen. McKnight's battery was on the skirmish-line, continually shelling their rear; it was a splendid sight—the troops in four parallel lines, with cavalry on either flank, pursuing the flying rebels. They made a stand several times, but our skirmish-line compelled them to leave. The weather was yet very warm. At dark the enemy opened upon us from a hill with four pieces of artillery, but were soon compelled to leave. It was a splendid picture for an artist—the sun setting behind the hills, the flash of the cannon and musketry was grand beyond description. The men, foraging, lived well, as the country was filled with vegetables of all kinds.

The army was now 42 miles from Winchester, and 39 miles from Staunton. The troops remained in camp during the night, marching the next day 15 miles in line of battle up the Valley. The enemy could not be seen, having moved during the night up the Luray Valley. Halting at Harrisonburg, the Third Division headquarters were established at the house formerly occupied by Fremont and Hunter as their headquarters. The troops remained in camp at Harrisonburg 10 days, confiscating tobacco, sugar, matches, etc. Harrisonburg is a very pretty place 20 miles from Staunton, of about 1,000 inhabitants. Squads of men were sent out each day to

FORAGE OFF THE COUNTRY, as the troops were out of rations, and it was necessary the men should be supplied.



CAVALRY SKIRMISH.

The army was now 104 miles from Harper's Ferry, the base of supplies. It took the teams four days to go and four days to come; the route was infested with guerrillas, making it necessary to have a strong guard; but, in spite of all vigilance, numbers of men were killed and the wagons captured.

The troops were ordered out, marching to Mount Crawford to relieve the cavalry. Finding the enemy in strong position, they were driven back, as they were strongly posted in a gap in the mountains. They were not again attacked, and the troops moved back to Harrisonburg.

On the 1st of October the supply train arrived from Harper's Ferry, with mail and papers; also the Paymaster, the troops receiving two months' pay. It was rumored in camp that Grant had moved on Petersburg, capturing 15 guns and 400 prisoners. The cavalry again started off, reaching Staunton, destroying the bridges and a large amount of supplies, and advanced as far as Charlottesville.

On Oct. 6 orders were given to move. Marching back, the Valley was now clear of the enemy. As it was feared they would again return, every barn and haystack was burned on the route to prevent the enemy from subsisting in the Valley, as most of the farmers were rebels, and helped the guerrillas along. It was a splendid sight to see

the fires as the troops moved up the Valley—from mountain to mountain one continuous blaze of fire. Twenty-four miles were made that day, as it was cool and the men were out of rations, the supply train had not arrived, and the Valley was stripped of troops continually passing. The troops slept that night at Mount Jackson, with nothing to eat, the next day marching 17 miles, through Woodstock, halting at dark 12 miles from Strasburg, passing Fisher's Hill, where the enemy was whipped so badly on the 23d of September. The troops halted and took position on the north bank of Cedar Creek.

Having received considerable reinforcements, Early again returned to the Valley, and encountered our cavalry near Strasburg. CUSTER, WITH HIS BRIGADE, advanced, and after a brief encounter the enemy captured 30 wagons from Gen. Torbert. The weather at this time was very cold and windy. Our whole force of cavalry now arrived, and the enemy was driven back some distance, with the loss of 11 pieces of artillery, a number of prisoners, and all their wagons, together with those captured from Torbert, our forces following them vigorously.

As the Valley was supposed to be clear of the enemy, the Sixth Corps was ordered to Petersburg. Grant had moved several times, and had captured the Weldon Railroad, extending his lines some distance. Orders were given to move; marching 17 miles, passing through Strasburg and Middletown, halting at Front Royal, near Manassas Gap. During our stay there a man of my regiment was accidentally shot, dying the next day. His name was Ayers, of Co. B. A petition was circulated among the Jersey soldiers to return home and vote. It was signed by the officers, but was not carried through. The Legislature of New Jersey was opposed to it, and used their utmost endeavors to prevent it. Permission was then asked to vote in the field; that was also denied. Other troops were granted that privilege; we were not. New Jersey was in the hands of the Copperheads, and with bitter feelings of enmity toward them, the soldiers were compelled to stand it.

On the 13th the corps started for Petersburg from Front Royal. The troops had been in the Valley some time, and did not wish to leave. Sheridan was loved by all, and the men were anxious to remain under his command; but positive orders from Grant were that the corps should again

JOIN THE POTOMAC ARMY,

having been only temporarily detached. The weather was very cold, and visions of earthworks and trenches in front of Petersburg rose vividly before the men, and none of us wished to go. After marching 15 miles, passing a place called White Post, the column was ordered to halt, and soon it resounded throughout the line that the order was countermanded. Cheer after cheer was given, and it was noised around that Grant had taken Petersburg, with 60 pieces of artillery and 30,000 prisoners. The men were very jubilant over the report, as we all believed it.

Moving back, the troops halted at a very pretty place called Millwood. The men immediately commenced foraging, as there was produce in abundance, no troops having ever encamped there. It turned out that Grant's taking Petersburg was a hoax, and instead Early was moving down the Valley with a large army of reinforcements. The Eighth and Nineteenth Corps were compelled to fall back from Fisher's Hill, and encamped on the north bank of Cedar Creek. Soon the deep booming of the cannon was heard at Millwood. At first the men thought it a salute in honor of Grant's victory, but it proved to be the Eighth and Nineteenth Corps engaged with Early at Cedar Creek. The corps was ordered to move immediately back on the road to Fisher's Hill, marching 20 miles, and halting in position near Middletown, as the enemy was again in their old position on Fisher's Hill. All idea of going to Petersburg was now abandoned, as there was enough to attend to in the Valley. Early again had a large army, and

ONCE MORE CONFRONTED SHERIDAN, this time with both flanks heavily guarded on Fisher's Hill. It was not then known how many troops the enemy had, as their coming was unexpected. Pickets were doubled, and a new line of works erected on Fisher's Hill for the purpose of resisting our advance. The troops now moved forward to Cedar Creek, and were formed in line as follows:

The Eighth Corps on the extreme left, near Massanutten Mountain; the Nineteenth next, and the Sixth on the right. Every morning the men were routed out early, expecting an attack, but none was made, and the vigilance of the men was relaxed. Five days the troops remained in camp near Middletown, Gen. Sheridan being on a visit to City Point to see Gen. Grant. During his absence the army was commanded by Gen. Wright. All was thought secure, and the men began to think the enemy's force comparatively small; but they were in force, and the boys of the Union army soon knew it. Early had determined to make one grand effort, and if possible save his reputation and recover all he had lost. Filled with this determination he moved his whole force on the night of Oct. 18, crossed in single file the mountain which separated the branches of the Shenandoah, forded the North Fork, and early on the morning of Oct. 19, under cover of the darkness and fog, surprised and turned our left flank, and captured the batteries that enfiladed our whole line. The men were aroused from slumber only to find the enemy in their rear. The Eighth Corps was surprised and partly surrounded, and fled as best they could, fighting bravely in front, flank and rear, leaving all their tents and ammunition in the hands of the enemy. They knew not which way to turn, and

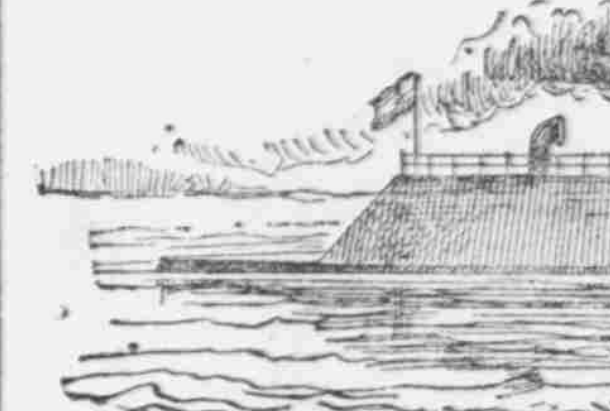
HUNDREDS WERE SHOT DOWN and numbers captured. The Sixth Corps, used to such things, rallied and formed in line near Middletown. By this time the wagons were in full retreat toward Winchester. It was a complete surprise, the troops

falling back five miles in confusion. Gen. Wright ordered the men to reform, but, with the Eighth and Nineteenth Corps in full retreat, the Sixth could not stand alone, and with the rest was compelled to fall back, fighting desperately. Early, confident of victory, urged on his men, who fought with desperation, and visions of Washington again appeared before them. The spoils that fell in their hands were a great compensation for what they had lost. Shelter tents, rubber blankets, knapsacks, blankets, tents, guns, ammunition, and well-filled haversacks fell into the hands of the Yankees, and to their half-starved and half-clothed bodies were indeed prizes. After falling back five miles our lines were partially rallied and the retreat stopped, but a fearful loss of life, and our boys were mad to think that, after riding the Valley of the enemy, as they supposed, and whipping them so badly, they were again in force and our army retreating from them. "Where is Sheridan?" was the cry, as all seemed to feel that if he was near the tide of battle would be turned in our favor. Soon a cloud of dust was seen on the road, far in the distance, and with thunder-tread came the well-known horse carrying with it its rider, the brave Sheridan. Reaching the disordered line, he inquired for Gen. Wright. The men soon knew that Sheridan was near, and all felt confident of success. When the battle commenced he was at Winchester, but he arrived in time to arrange the lines and repulse a heavy attack of the enemy.

The Eighth and Nineteenth Corps had now rallied and formed in line, with the Sixth Corps in the center. Sheridan immediately assumed the offensive and attacked the enemy in turn. After considerable maneuvering Sheridan ordered a charge and the enemy was driven back with great slaughter, with the loss of their trains and artillery and the trophies captured during the morning. Had not Sheridan arrived as he did

ALL WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST.

The cavalry under Custer was sent on their



THE ALBEMARLE.

flank, driving them pell-mell across Cedar Creek, slaughtering them like sheep. Sixty-one pieces of artillery were captured from them, and 8,000 prisoners. Our success was complete, though our loss was heavy. Capt. McKnight's battery lost four pieces, and nearly all their horses were killed and wounded. The 14th N. J. was commanded by Capt. Janeway, and lost heavily. Adj't Burroughs Ross was killed. He was formerly a private, and for gallant conduct had been promoted from one position to another until he received his commission as Adjutant in place of Buckalew, who had resigned on account of wounds received at Monocacy. He was a fine officer, and his loss could not easily be supplied.

The wreck of the rebel army escaped during the night, and fled in the direction of Staunton and Lynchburg, and pursuit being made by the cavalry to Mount Jackson, hundreds of them were captured. The battle of Cedar Creek will long be remembered by the Sixth Corps; at first driven back with severe loss, they in turn rallied, and to them will be attributed the tide of battle turning in our favor. But the Wilderness and those hard-fought battles of the Potomac Army were lessons not easily forgotten, and they, as usual, were ready for any emergency. The Second Division lost heavily, more so than the rest. As our lines fell back the enemy had stripped our dead and wound-



THE COAST OF NORTH CAROLINA.

ed as they lay on the field, and when our men recovered their lost ground they were seen lying as they fell, stark naked, and cold in death. Such scenes only made our men fight the harder, and Early paid dearly for his boldness in surprising us in the morning.

THE REBEL GEN. RAMSEUR was mortally wounded, and fell into our hands. He died at the headquarters of Gen. Sheridan, and his remains were sent South by way of City Point.

Thus ended the enemy's last attempt to invade the North via the Shenandoah Valley, and Early, with his demoralized and disheartened troops, was seen no more in that vicinity. Ninety pieces of artillery had been taken from them and over 10,000 prisoners at different times in the Valley, and with a few pieces of artillery and about 12,000 men they reached Staunton, and but one brigade were transported to Rich-

EXCITING ADVENTURES.

Reconnoissances in North Carolina Waters.

CAPTURE OF PLYMOUTH.

The Albemarle Engages the Entire Wooden Fleet.

A NIGHT IN A SWAMP.

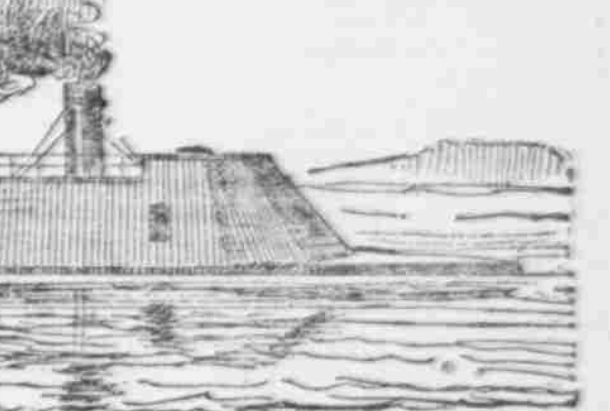
Left by the Boats, Return to the Fleet on a Raft.

BY RUDOLPH S. SOMMER, LATE ACTING MASTER U. S. NAVY, FRANKLIN, MASS.

It has been generally understood that no attempt had been planned for the destruction of the rebel ram Albemarle, but that the commanders of the vessels stationed at the mouth of Roanoke River were lying inactive after the engagement with the ram until Lieut. W. B. Cushing arrived with the torpedo launch.

But this was not the case. Constant reconnoissances took place with a view for her destruction, and in my reminiscences which follow, while serving on board the Tacony, I will relate some of my own exploits. The dates are taken from the log-book of that vessel.

Jan. 21, 1864, I was ordered to the steamer Tacony, lying out in Philadelphia, Lieut-



THE ALBEMARLE.

tenant-Commander Wm. T. Truxtun. She carried a battery of four 9-inch guns, one 60-pound pivot, and four howitzers. We left Philadelphia in the latter part of February and proceeded to New Bern, N. C., where we remained for some time stationed, now and then making a cruise in Albemarle Sound.

April 17, 1864, the Tacony called at Plymouth, N. C. Gen. H. W. Wessells was in command of the troops, and Lieutenant-Commander C. W. Flusser, Senior Officer, in command of the vessels in the Roanoke River. They came on board and were received with the usual naval courtesies. All was reported to be quiet, and no enemy in the neighborhood; but Little Washington was supposed to be in immediate danger, so after a few hours the Tacony got up steam and proceeded to that place. C. W. Flusser had made his preparations in case of an attack, and felt himself able to encounter the ram if she should come down. We found the gunboats Miami and Southfield lashed together fore and aft with large hawsers and chains; forward, especially, the lashings were strong, and so secured that their bows would make an angle of about two points. It was generally understood that Flusser intended to ram the Albemarle, but such was not the case, for the river being narrow—only about 300 feet wide abreast of Plymouth—no maneuvering could be done, and Flusser's plans, so I am informed, were that



THE COAST OF NORTH CAROLINA.

upon the approach of the ram to steam ahead and get the Albemarle's bow between the two vessels, then go ahead full steam and back her up on the bank of the river and

THEREBY DISABLE HER PROPELLER. April 19 at Little Washington we found all quiet, but during the whole day heard heavy cannonading, and on the 20th we received the news of the capture of Plymouth by the Confederates, the sinking of the Southfield by the Albemarle, and the death of Lieutenant-Commander Flusser. I here give an account of an army officer present, who also stated that the very moment the Tacony left, the Confederate pickets were in sight, and had been during the day.

"On the 18th of April between 3 and 4 in the morning the Confederates tried to storm Fort Gary (above Plymouth), but were repulsed. Later, heavy artillery opened fire on the town and breastworks, and the fight became general. To protect Fort Williams (below Plymouth) the Southfield and Miami

(Continued on Second page.)